

rushed to implement election laws, policies, and practices that could never pass muster under the Section 5 preclearance regime. My constituents remember very well the Voter ID law passed in Texas in 2011, which required every registered voter to present a valid government-issued photo ID on the day of polling in order to vote. The Justice Department blocked the law in March of 2012, and it was Section 5 that prohibited it from going into effect. At least it did until the Shelby decision, because on the very same day that Shelby was decided officials in Texas announced they would immediately implement the Photo ID law, and other election laws, policies, and practices that could never pass muster under the Section 5 preclearance regime.

The Texas Photo ID law was challenged in federal court and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit upheld the decision of U.S. District Court Judge Nelva Gonzales Ramos that Texas' strict voter identification law discriminated against Blacks and Hispanics and violated Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act. Madam Speaker, protecting voting rights and combating voter suppression schemes are two of the critical challenges facing our great democracy. Without safeguards to ensure that all citizens have equal access to the polls, more injustices are likely to occur and the voices of millions silenced. Those of us who cherish the right to vote justifiably are skeptical of Voter ID laws because we understand how these laws, like poll taxes and literacy tests, can be used to impede or negate the ability of seniors, racial and language minorities, and young people to cast their votes. Consider the demographic groups who lack a government issued ID:

- African Americans: 25 percent;
- Asian Americans: 20 percent;
- Hispanic Americans: 19 percent;
- young people, aged 18 through 24: 18 percent;
- persons with incomes less than \$35,000: 15 percent;

And there are other ways abridging or suppressing the right to vote, including:

- Curtailing or eliminating early voting;
- ending same-day registration;
- not counting provisional ballots cast in the wrong precinct on Election Day will not count;
- eliminating adolescent pre-registration;
- shortening poll hours.

Lessening the standards governing voter challenges thus allowing self-proclaimed "ballot security vigilantes" like the King Street Patriots to cause trouble at the polls.

Madam Speaker, on this day, the 56th anniversary of the landmark Voting Rights Act signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson on August 6, 1965, I call upon the leadership of Congress in both chambers to bring to a vote legislation intended to protect the right to vote of all Americans.

Specifically, I call for the passage of H.R. 4, the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, of which I am an original co-sponsor, which repairs the damage done to the Voting Rights Act by the Supreme Court's Shelby decision. This legislation provides even greater federal oversight of jurisdictions which have a history of voter suppression and protects vulnerable communities from discriminatory voting practices. Madam Speaker, before concluding there is one other point I would like to stress.

In his address to the nation before signing the Voting Rights Act of 1965, President Johnson said:

"Presidents and Congresses, laws and lawsuits can open the doors to the polling places and open the doors to the wondrous rewards which await the wise use of the ballot.

"But only the individual Negro, and all others who have been denied the right to vote, can really walk through those doors, and can use that right, and can transform the vote into an instrument of justice and fulfillment."

In other words, political power, and the justice, opportunity, inclusion, and fulfillment it provides, comes not from the right to vote but in the exercise of that right. And that means it is the civic obligation of every citizen to both register and vote in every election, state and local as well as federal. Because if we can register and vote, but fail to do so, we are guilty of voluntary voter suppression, the most effective method of disenfranchisement ever devised. And in recent years, Americans have not been doing a very good job of exercising our civic responsibility to register, vote, and make their voices heard.

Madam Speaker, for millions of Americans, the right to vote protected by the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is sacred treasure, earned by the sweat and toil and tears and blood of ordinary Americans who showed the world it was possible to accomplish extraordinary things. So on this 56th anniversary of that landmark law, let us rededicate ourselves to honoring those who won for us this precious right by remaining vigilant and fighting against both the efforts of others to abridge or suppress the right to vote and our own apathy in exercising this sacred right.

#### IN RECOGNITION OF SERGEANT FIRST CLASS (RETIRED) JOSEPH FRENCHMAN KYLES

**HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.**

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, August 10, 2021*

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor an extraordinary leader, soldier, veteran, and dedicated civil servant, SFC (Ret.) Joseph F. Kyles, who most recently retired from an impressive career with the United States Postal Service spanning almost three decades. He was honored at a retirement event on Saturday, August 7, 2021, at 6 p.m. at the Columbus Civic Center.

Joseph Frenchman Kyles was born in Sampson, Alabama on July 26, 1950, to the union of Nathaniel and Corine Kyles as the oldest of seven children. He is the loving husband of Minister Nila Kyles, the father of four children, and the grandfather of five grandchildren.

In 1972, Joseph Kyles answered the call to serve his nation and joined the United States Army. During his distinguished 20-year career in the U.S. Army, he became a non-commissioned officer retiring at the rank of Sergeant First Class. During his Army career, he served at Fort Benning in the Harmony Church area (specializing in Engineering, Weapon Night Firing, Leadership Training, and Tactical Training Maneuvers) and completed various overseas duties and assignments before retiring in 1992. To further hone his skills, he attended Columbus Technical College to obtain a degree in Engineering, Leadership, and Tactics Training.

Following his retirement from the U.S. Army, SFC (Ret.) Kyles built quite an impressive public service career with the United States Postal Service (USPS), beginning in 1992, when he started as a mail clerk. Over the span of 29 years, he served in several other capacities with USPS including mail handler, mail carrier, and mail truck driver.

Also, following his military service, he continued to serve his community and make an impact in the lives of others. His contributions include serving and financially supporting youth through Little League Football and Softball; Lonnie Jackson Academy Tutorial program; South Columbus Coalition; South Columbus Exchange Club; Youth of the Year program; and The House Of Refuge Ministry with his wife and son, Darian Hall, who is the pastor. He has also served as mentor and financial supporter for his fellow Veterans by assisting and transporting veterans to and from appointments, helping them acquire benefits and receive medical supplies for life endurance following their military service.

Douglas Adams once said that "To give real service you must add something which cannot be bought or measured with money, and that is sincerity and integrity." SFC (Ret.) Joseph F. Kyles has demonstrated through his career and life, outstanding achievement, service, and public distinction. Our community, our state, and our nation are better because of him. In honor of his commendable accomplishments and years of service, B.H. "Skip" Henderson III, Mayor of Columbus, Georgia, signed a proclamation declaring August 7, 2021 as "Joseph Frenchman Kyles Day".

Therefore, Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join my wife, Vivian, and me, along with the more than 730,000 residents of the Second Congressional District in honoring and commending SFC (Ret.) Joseph Frenchman Kyles for his outstanding service to his nation, community, and humankind as well as upon the occasion of his retirement from the United States Postal Service. We extend our best wishes to him as he begins a new chapter in his life.

#### HONORING THE BIG RED BARREL PROJECT

**HON. ELISSA SLOTKIN**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, August 10, 2021*

Ms. SLOTKIN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the tenth anniversary of the Big Red Barrel Project, founded in Livingston County.

On Good Friday in 2011, two local residents, Joe Carney and Terry Murray, struck up a conversation with then-Under Sheriff Mike Murphy. The three men were attending a biannual DEA drug takeback event and agreed that safe disposal of prescription drugs should happen every day—not just every two years.

What began with that conversation turned into the original Big Red Barrel, a metal dropbox at the Michigan State Police Post in Brighton where folks could safely dispose of their unused medications. Today, there are more than 75 Big Red Barrels all over the state.